

AMALGAM



TM

\$1.95 US
\$2.75 CAN
JUN '97

DON'T DARE MESS WITH THE MYSTERIOUS

BATTHING

#1

HAMA
DAMAGGIO
SIENKIEWICZ



THE
SHOCKER
YOU NEVER
EXPECTED
TO SEE!

DIRECT SALES



IN THE SHADOW OF THE RIVER DRIVE,
WHERE THE BROWN WATER MEETS
THE GREY EDGE OF THE CITY...

...AND THE STINK OF THE GOTHAM
FISH MARKET MINGLES WITH DOWNWIND
TRACES OF THE SEWAGE TREATMENT
PLANT...

...LIES A NETHER-REALM
OF WINDS, JUNKIES AND
URBAN WALKING-WOUNDED.

"A GOOD PLACE TO LOSE SOMEBODY"
AS SOME OF THE LOCAL WISE-GUYS
MIGHT SAY.

"... THE UNIFORMS HAD IT
TAGGED AS A MOB-RELATED
HIT, BUT I KNEW IT WAS THE
BAT-THING AS SOON AS
I SAW THE WOUNDS.

HUGGY MADDOX
NEVER WON NO BEAUTY
CONTESTS WHEN HE WAS
AMONGST THE LIVING...

... BUT THEM CLAW
MARKS AND ACID
BURNS SURE DON'T
HELP.

WHY WAS A MIDDLE-
LEVEL DRUG DEALER STRAPPIN'
HUSHED IRON?

HUGGY
WAS NO STREET
SOLDIER--HE WAS
MANAGEMENT!

HE USED TO HANG WITH FAT
FREDDY FANELLI UNTIL I SENT
FANELLI UPSTATE FOR TEN TO
TWENTY.

FAT FREDDY
FANCIED HIMSELF
A STONE GANGSTER
WHEN HE WASN'T
PEDDLING NOSE-
CANDY TO ROCK
STARS.

YOU PUT A LOAD OF TWELVE-
GAUGE RUCK INTO FAT FREDDY'S
FACE, DIDN'T YOU?

HAD TO.

HE WENT
FOR HIS BISCUIT,
BABE.

BAT-THING! SOMEONE TO WATCH OVER ME

WHU--?

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2

BAT-THING!

HE NEVER
LEFT THE SCENE!
HE'S--

WHOOOOOSH!!

3



--GONE!

WHERE
IS THAT
MONSTER??

DIDJA
SEE HIM?
HE'S STILL
HANGING
AROUND!!



COOL IT, MONTDOYA,
THERE'S TAXPAYERS DRIVING
BY UP THERE.

BAT-THING DON'T
HAVE NO NERVES LIKE YOU
AND ME. HE'S JUST HANGING
OUT BY INSTINCT.

NOW, I GOTTA GO
OVER AND TELL FRANCIE-
ELLEN SALLIS THAT HER
HUSBAND KIRK IS BACK.



I'LL SEE YOU
BACK AT THE
OFFICE.

YOU GONNA
TYPE UP THE
REPORT,
RIGHT?

DON'T I
ALWAYS?

WHAT ARE YOU,
HER PRIVATE GUARD,
BULLOCK?

SURE. HER
AND SIX MILLION
OTHER CITIZENS...

...THAT'S WHAT THE
JOB IS ALL ABOUT.

HOW COME I COME UP WITH
MY BEST ZINGERS WHEN SHE'S
OUTTA EARSHOT?

OOF! STUPID,
LUMPY FM RADIO
ALWAYS STICKIN' IN
MY SIDE--

OF COURSE, I MIGHT
NOT HAVE THAT PROB IF
I LAY OFF THE DONUTS
AND CHINESE
TAKE-OUT.

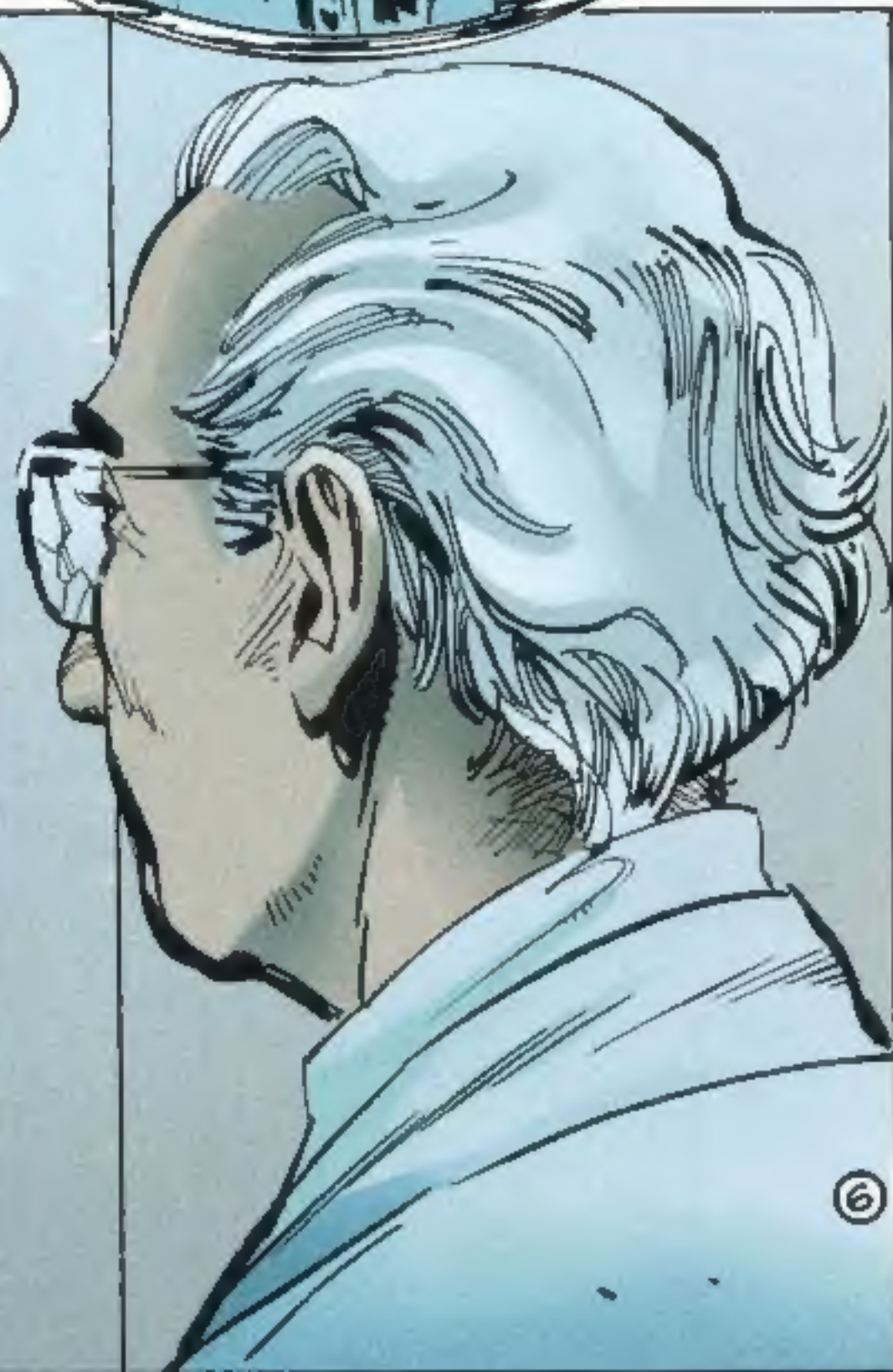
THAT'LL
BE THE
DAY.

LESSEE...
FRANCIE SALLIS IS
AT 53 BRIDWELL
STREET...

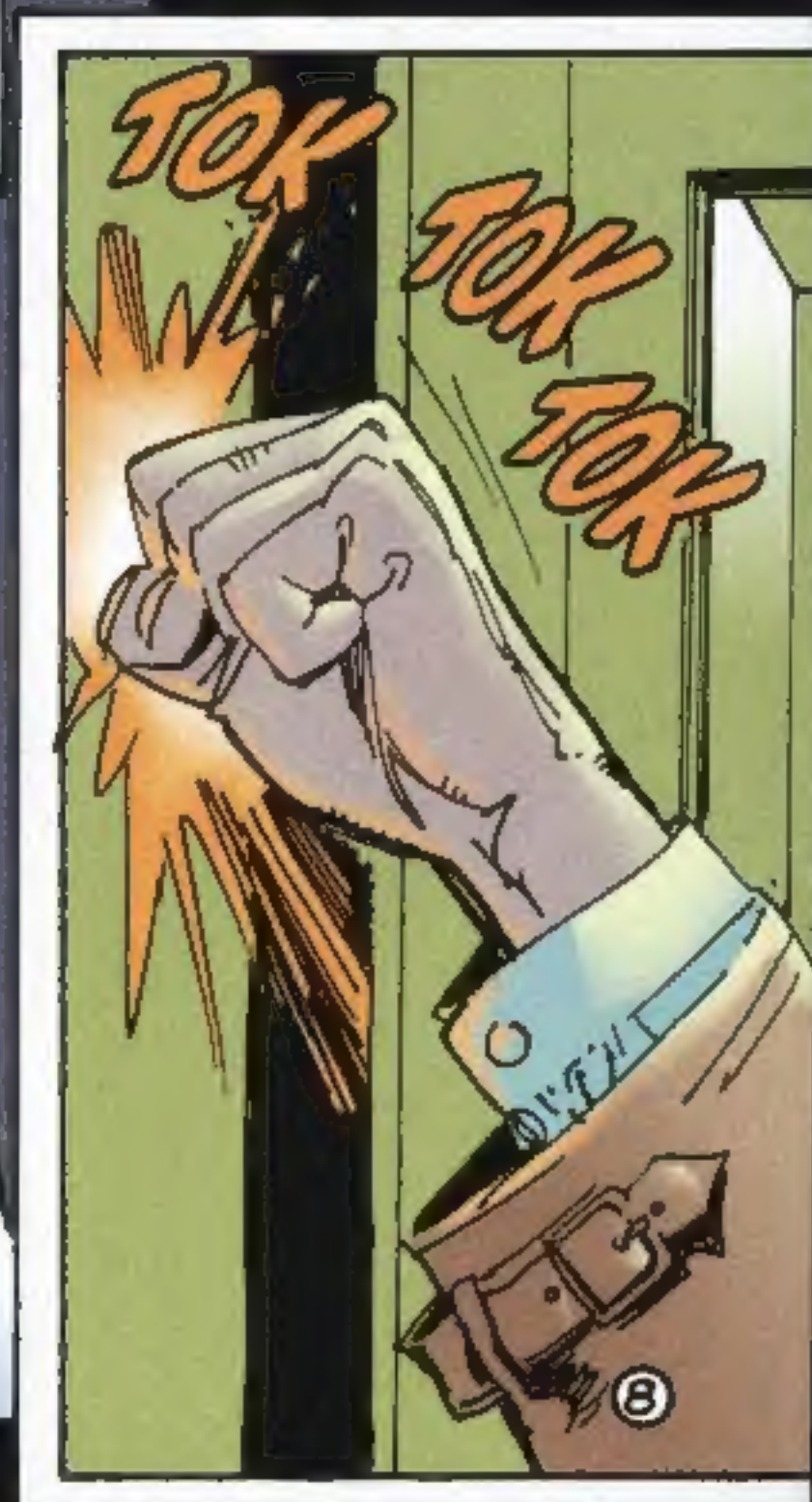
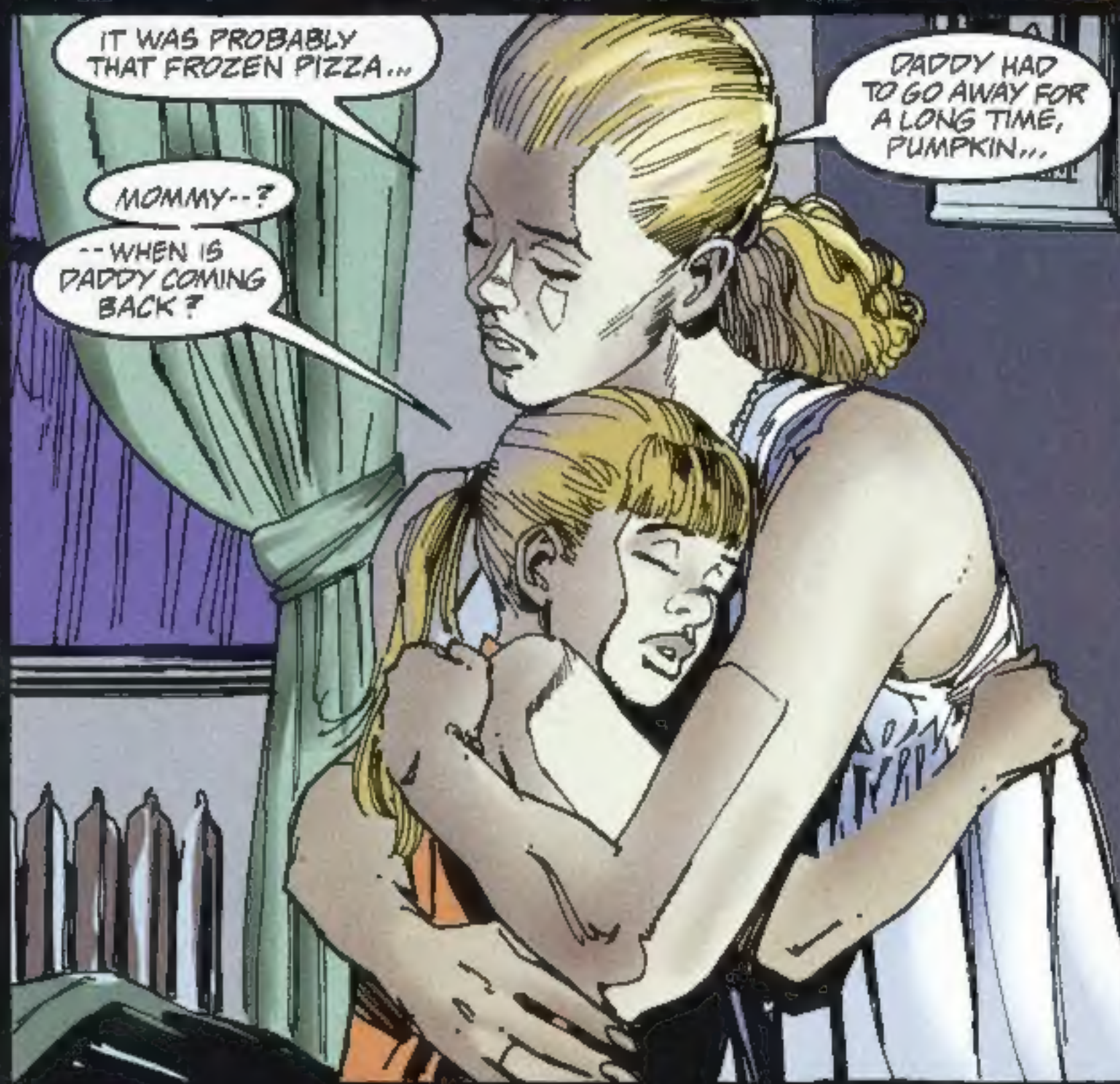
THASSS
RIGHT,
BULLOCK...

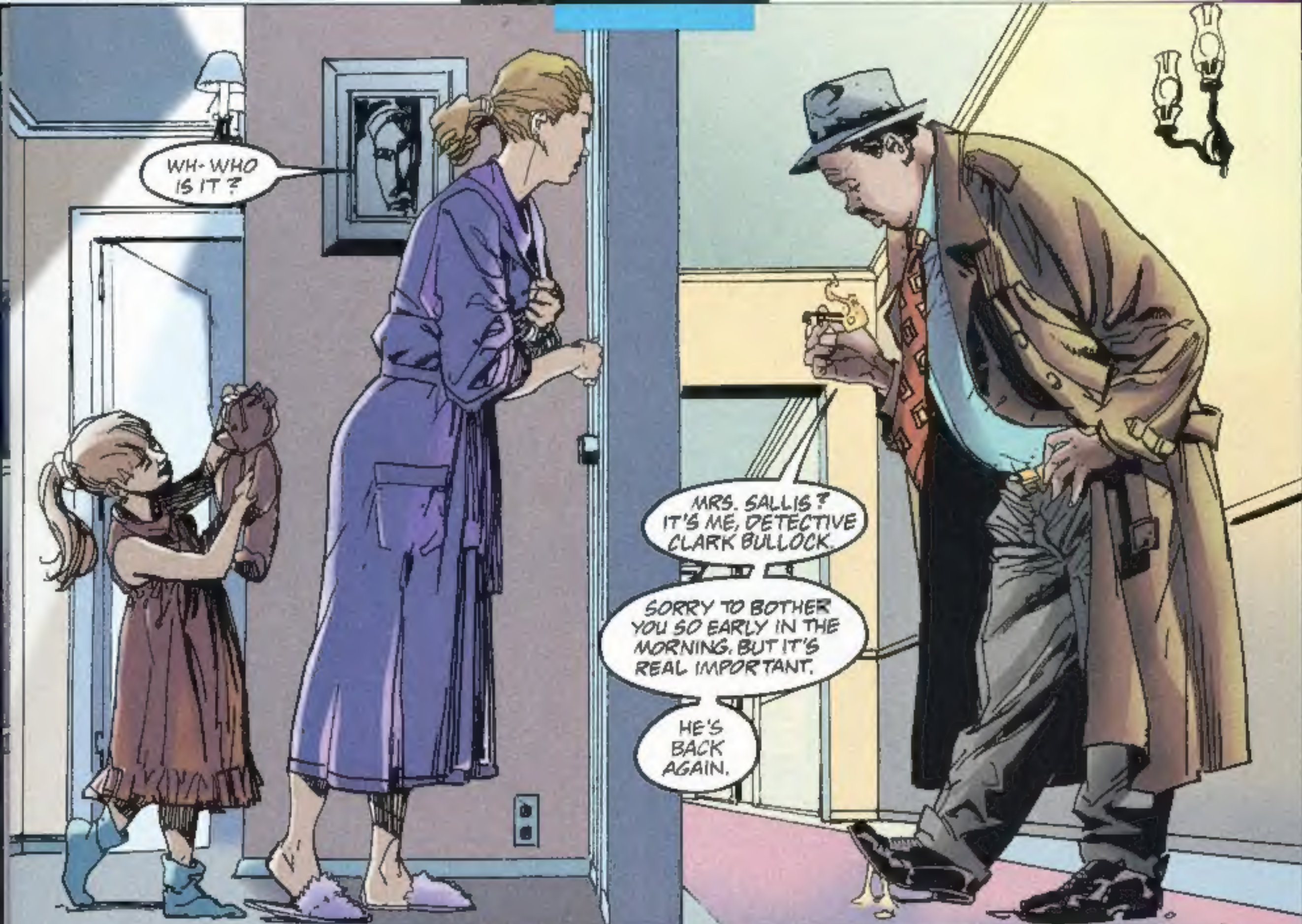
...YOU'RE SSSO SSSMUG,
YA DON'T EVEN WATCH YER
BACK!

THASSS GONNA
BE YOUR DOWNFALL,
MR. SSSMARTY-PANTSSS
DETECTIVE!







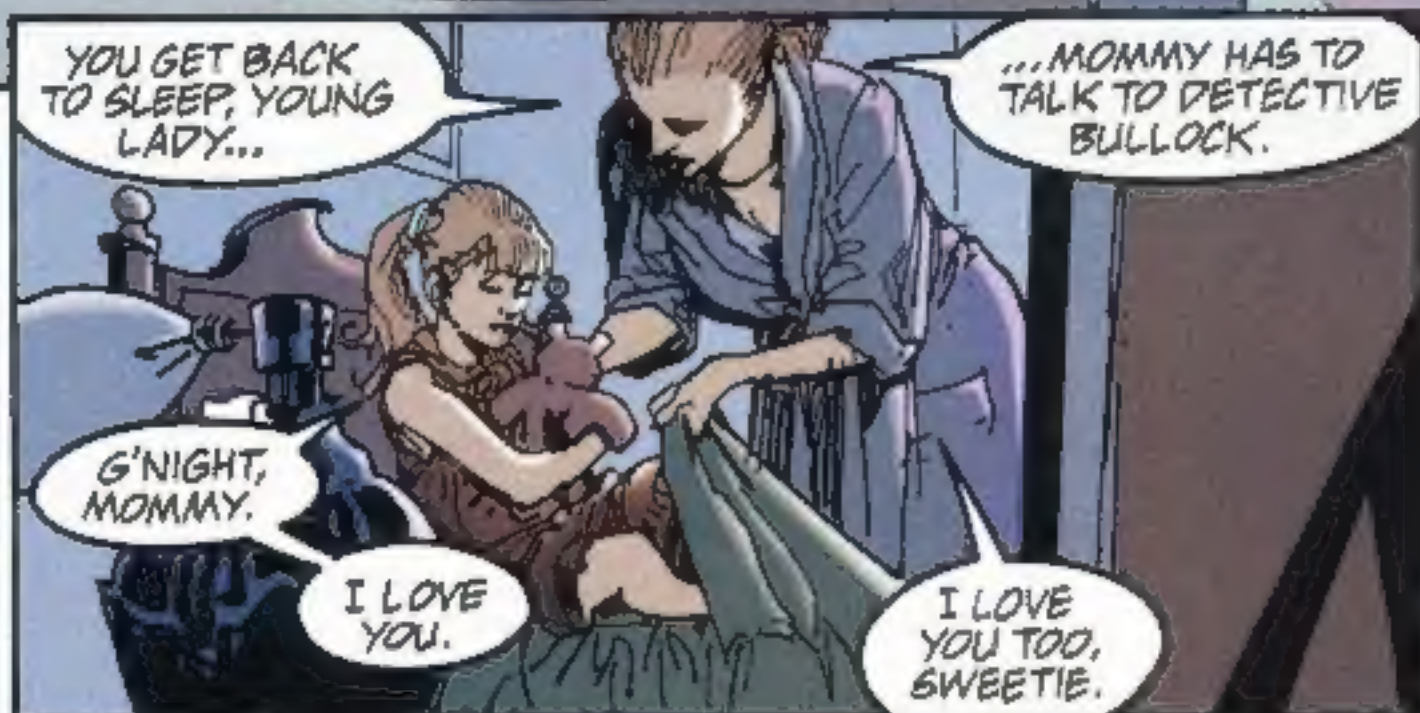


WH- WHO
IS IT ?

MRS. SALLIS ?
IT'S ME, DETECTIVE
CLARK BULLOCK.

SORRY TO BOTHER
YOU SO EARLY IN THE
MORNING, BUT IT'S
REAL IMPORTANT.

HE'S
BACK
AGAIN.



YOU GET BACK
TO SLEEP, YOUNG
LADY...

... MOMMY HAS TO
TALK TO DETECTIVE
BULLOCK.

G'NIGHT,
MOMMY.

I LOVE
YOU.

I LOVE
YOU TOO,
SWEETIE.



I DON'T CARE
WHAT YOU SAY,
DETECTIVE
BULLOCK, KIRK
WOULD NEVER
HARM ME OR
KELLY--



HE'S NOT DR. KIRK
SALLIS ANYMORE,
MA'AM...

... HE'S A CREATURE
WHO KILLS AND HE'S BEEN
DOING JUST THAT
TONIGHT...

DADDY... ?



...DADDY?

DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND?
HE LOVES US!

MY DAD LOVED MY MOM, BUT THAT DIDN'T STOP HIM FROM BEATING ON HER.

"IS THAT THE REASON FOR YOUR PERSONAL INTEREST IN OUR SAFETY, DETECTIVE?"

"NO, MA'AM, IT'S THE REASON I BECAME A COP."



ISSS THAT YOU, SSSCRUGGS?

YOU KNOW WHO THISSS ISSS?



YOU GOTTA BE KIDDIN'?

SO WHAT'S THE ACTION, RADIATOR-MOUTH?

YOU STILL GOT THAT CONTRACT OUT? YOU STILL OFFERIN' THE BIG BUCKS?

WRITE DOWN THIS ADDRESSSS...



...FILL OUT THE PAPERWORK, HE SAYS--

--SO WHERE DID HE FILE IT IN ALL THIS MESS?

HOW CAN HE EXPECT ME TO--?



BRRRING

IT APPEARS TO BE A CANDID SHOT OF A YOUNG LADY AND A FOUR-YEAR-OLD GIRL IN FRONT OF A BUILDING I RECOGNIZE AS BEING ON BRIDWELL STREET. THE NUMBER IS ON THE DOOR. 53.



DETECTIVE CHRISTINE MONTROYA? THIS IS DR. SOSUMI AT THE M.E.'S OFFICE.

I WAS DOING THE PREP BEFORE THE AUTOPSY ON HUGWORTH A. MADDOX AND I DISCOVERED A PHOTOGRAPH TAPED TO THE SMALL OF HIS BACK



MY SISTER LIVES ON THE SAME BLOCK, YOU SEE, AND I NOTICED THE CORINTHIAN COLUMNS--



53 BRIDWELL?

WHAT WAS HUGGY MADDOX DOING WITH A PICTURE OF KIRK SALLIS'S WIFE AND KID TAPED TO HIS BACK??

WHAT'S THIS???

WHAT'S WHAT?



CAN'T TALK TO YOU ANY LONGER, DOC!

I'VE GOTTA GET A HOLD OF BULLOCK ASAP!!

ALERT BULLETIN
RECENT ESCAPEE



I SHOULD CHECK IN--

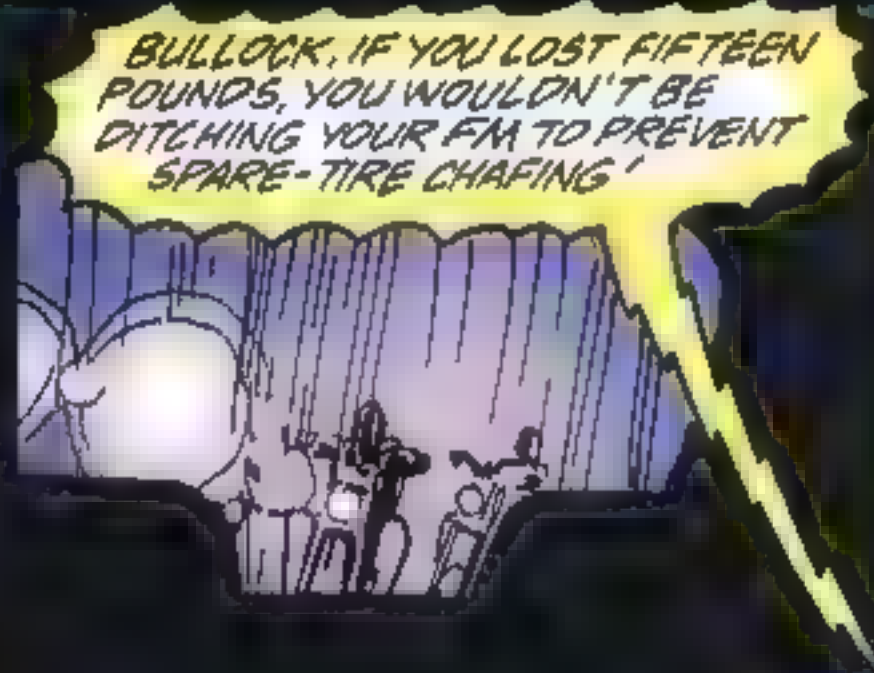
BLAST.

LEFT THE FM ON THE DASH AGAIN!



BULLOCK! WHERE ARE YOU???

HOLD YOUR HORSES!

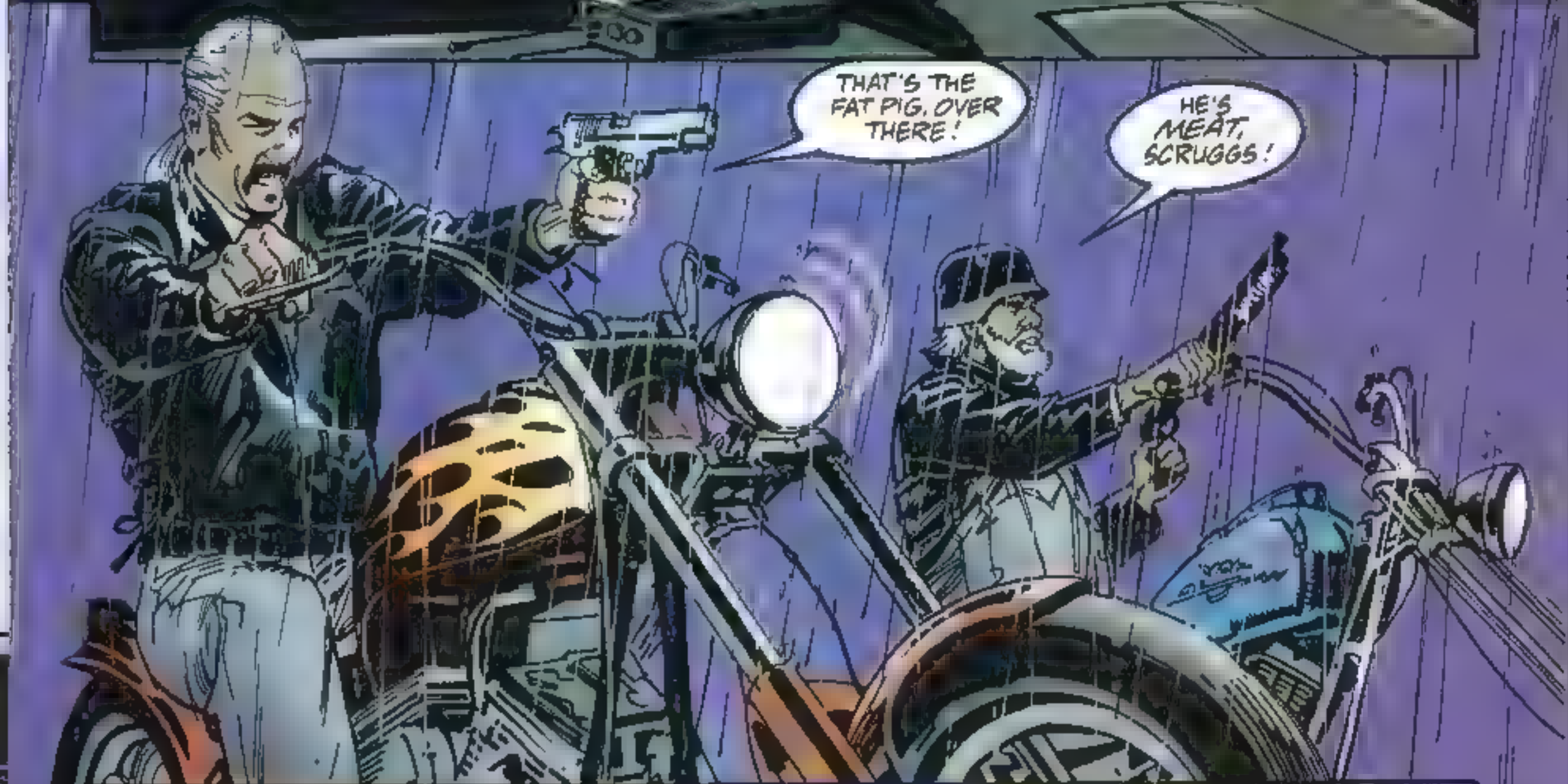


BULLOCK, IF YOU LOST FIFTEEN POUNDS, YOU WOULDN'T BE DITCHING YOUR FM TO PREVENT SPARE-TIRE CHAFING!



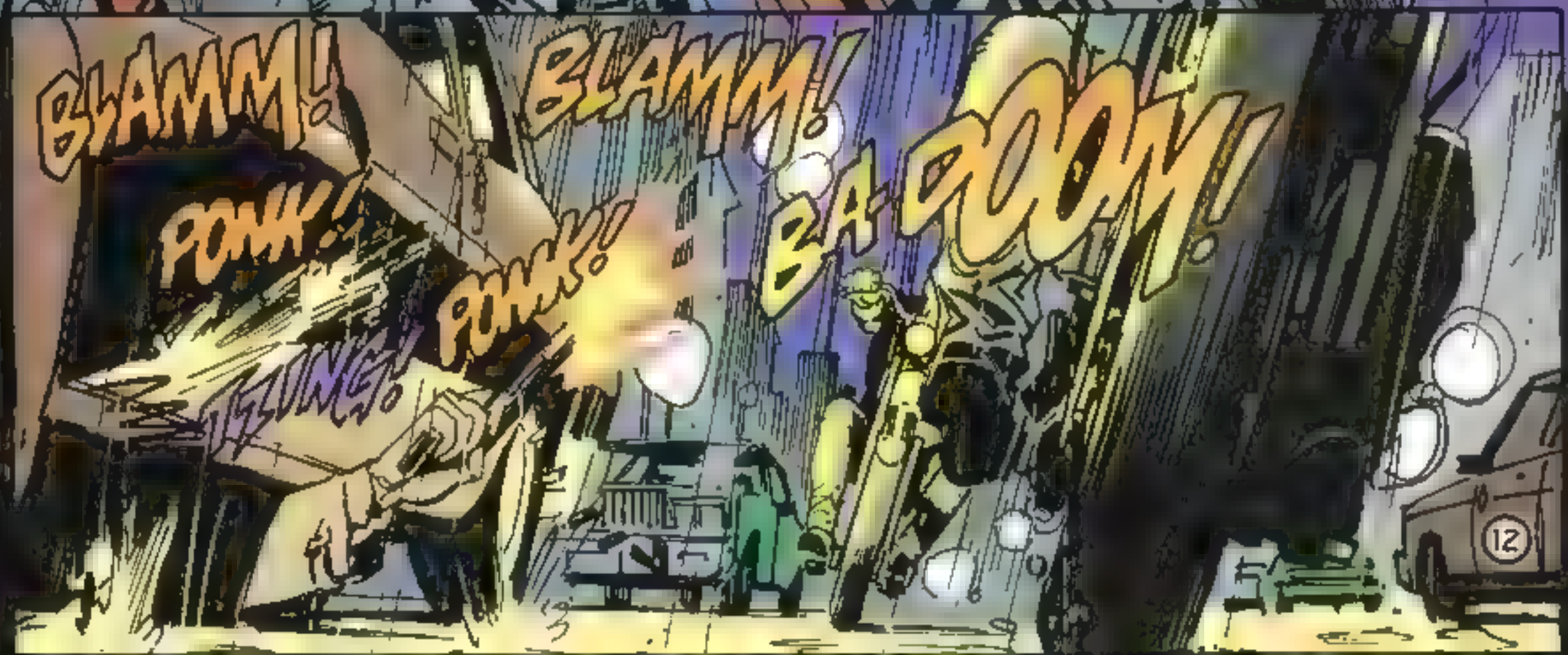
AWRIGHT! AWRIGHT!

I'M TRYIN' TO GET THE DOOR UNLOCKED!!



THAT'S THE FAT PIG, OVER THERE!

HE'S MEAT, SCRUGGS!



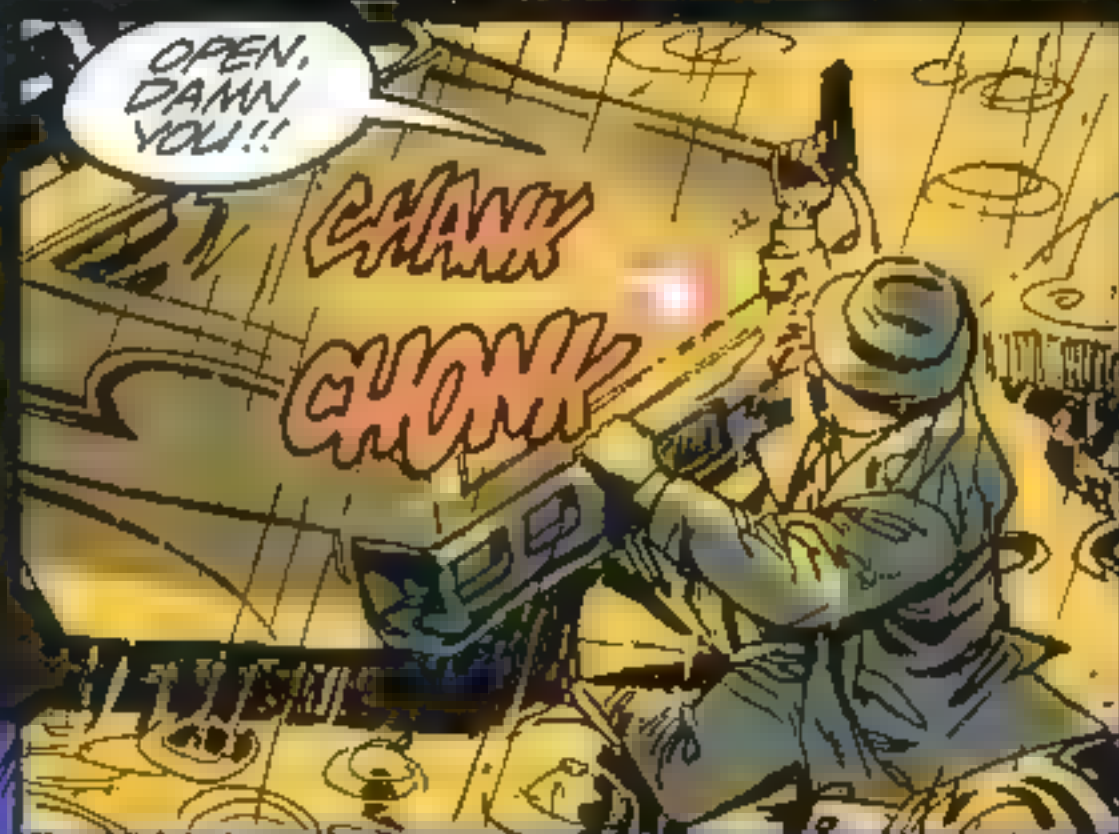
BLAMM!

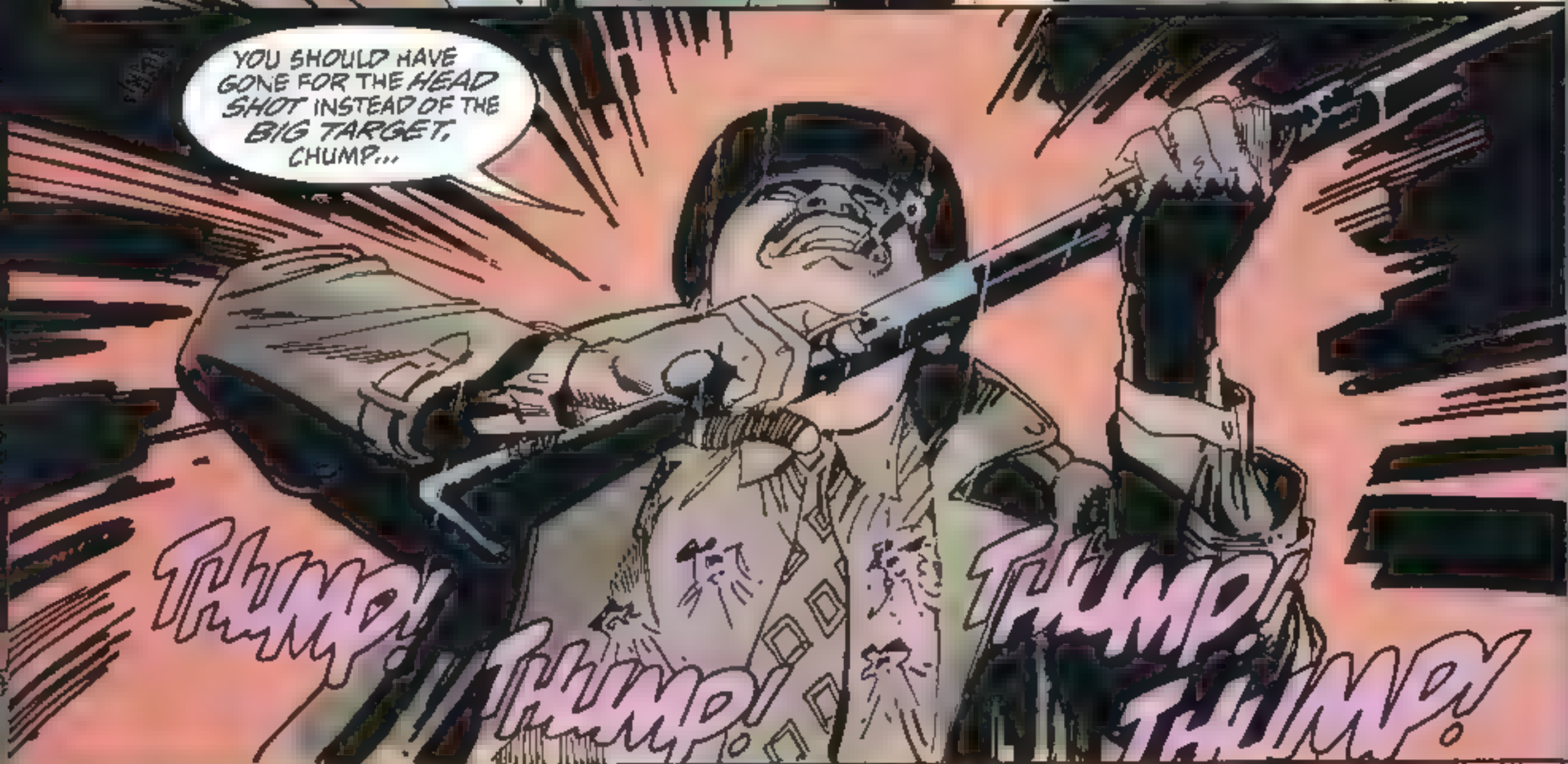
PONK!

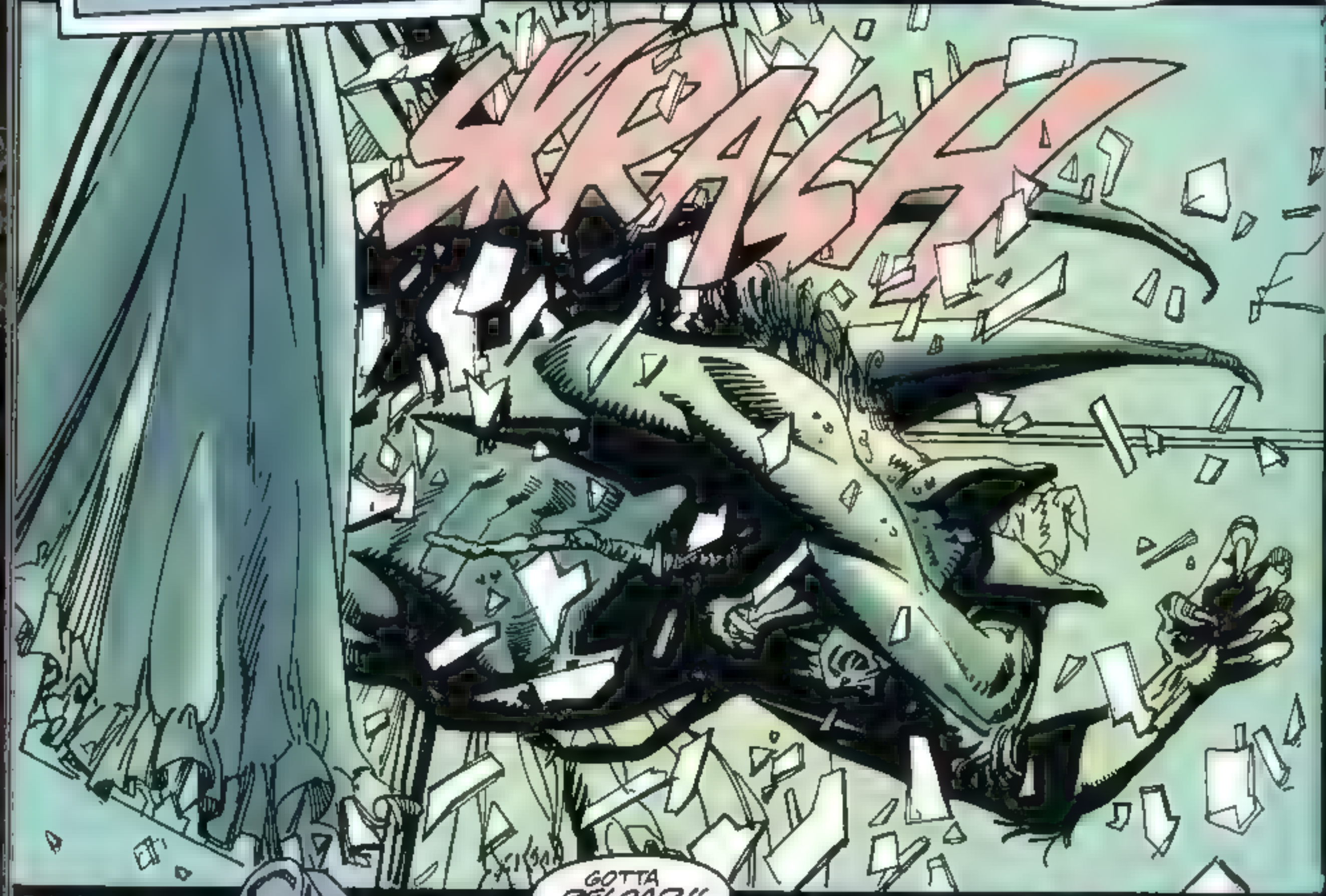
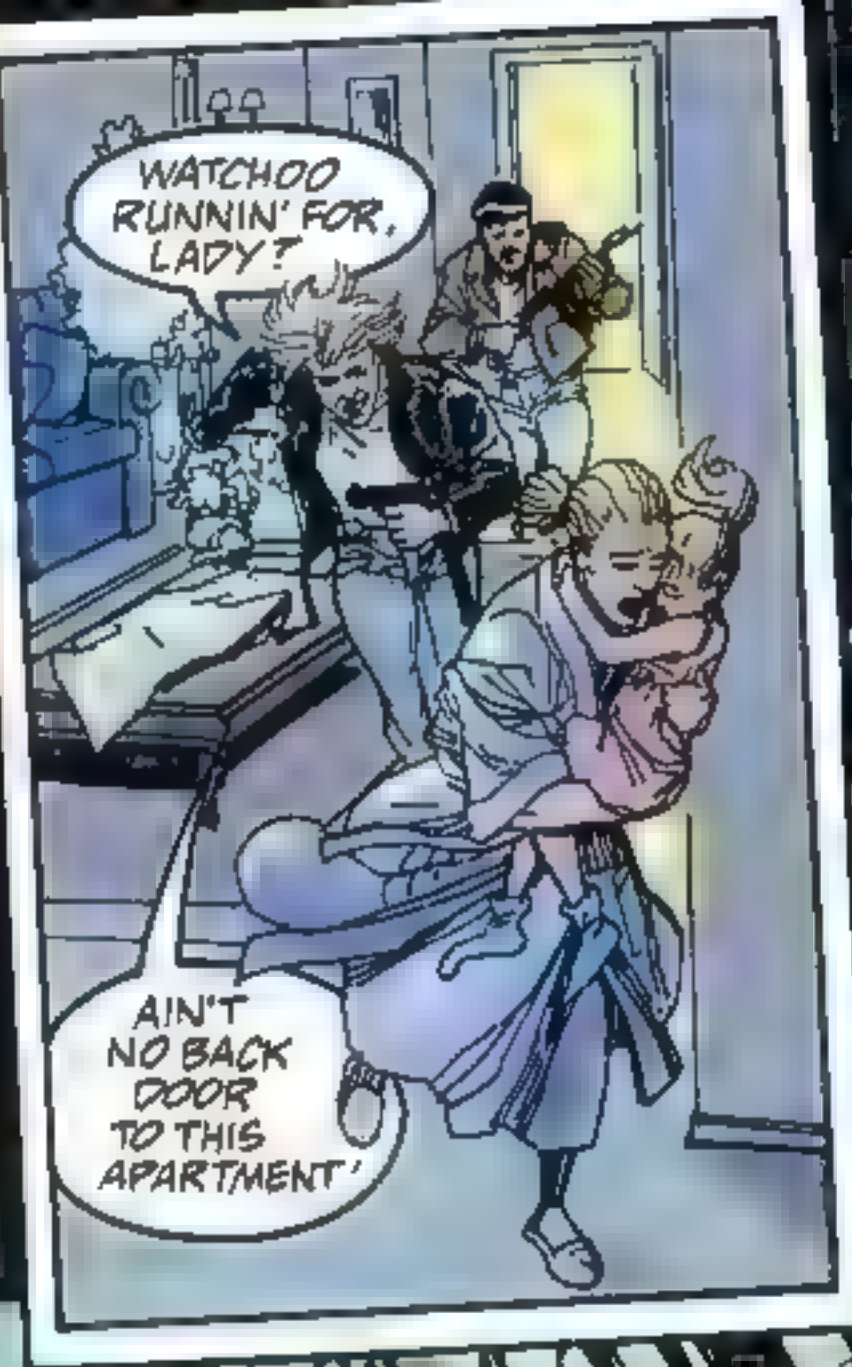
BLAMM!

PONK!

BA-BOOM!









WHAT IS THAT UGLY THING?

HOW COME IT DON'T DIE???

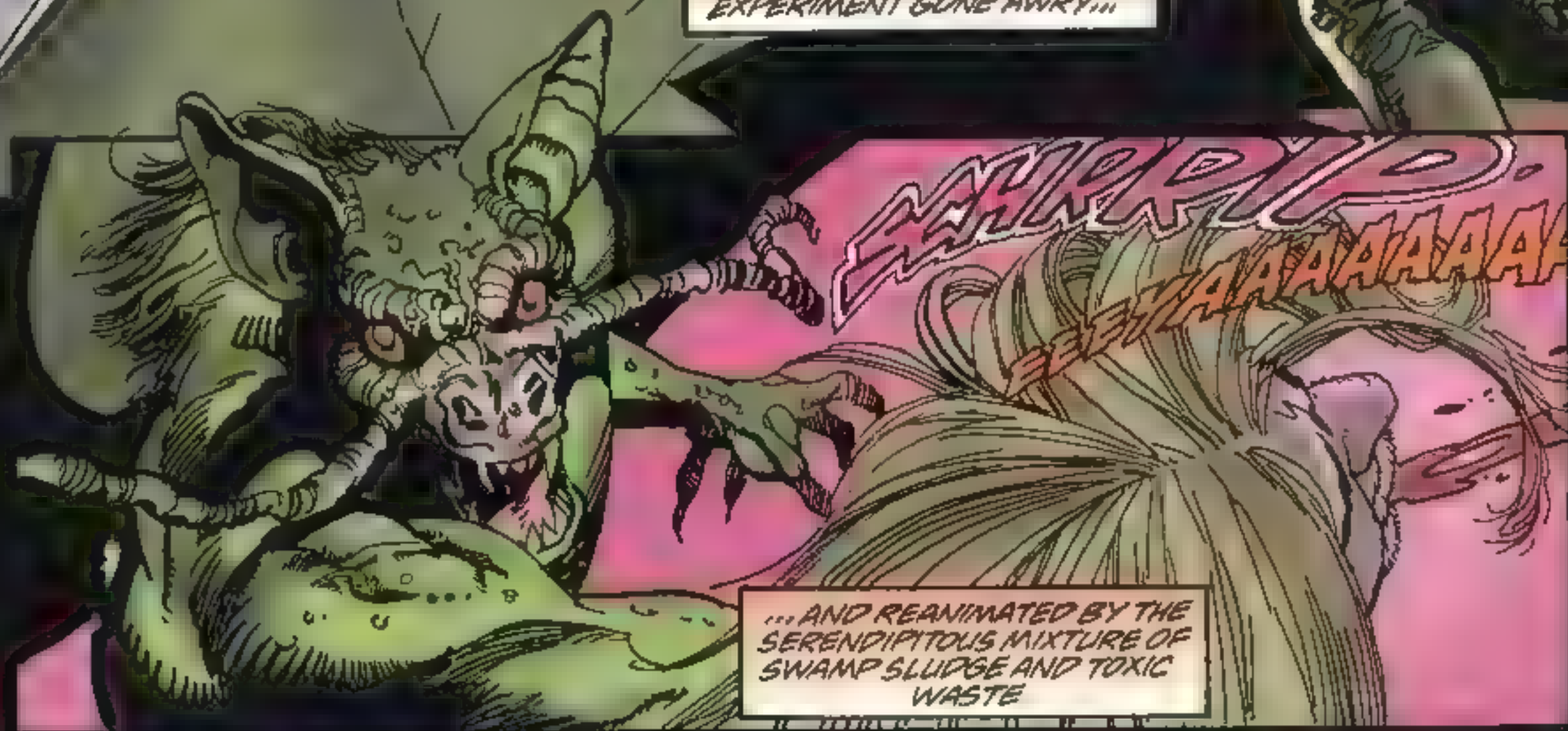
IT'S THE SWAMP BAT MONSTER--!

--THE ONE THAT'S BEEN ON THE NEWS!

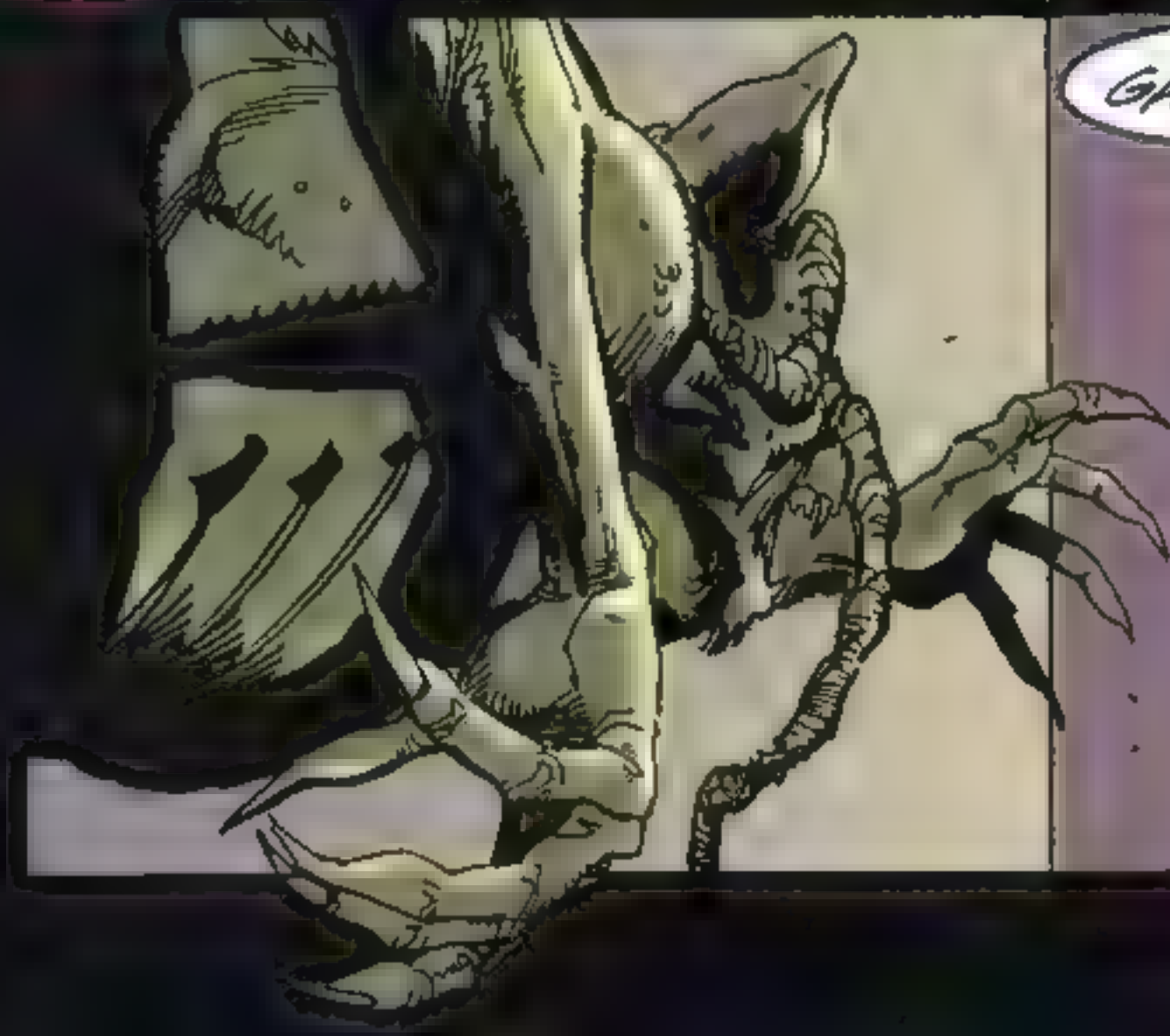
JUST KEEP SHOOTING!!!

THE HAIL OF LEAD IS FUTILE.

MERE PROJECTILES CAN ONLY TEMPORARILY DISPLACE THE DEAD TISSUE OF A GENETIC EXPERIMENT GONE AWRY...



...AND REANIMATED BY THE SERENDIPITOUS MIXTURE OF SWAMP SLUDGE AND TOXIC WASTE



GAAAAAA!



STAY AWAY FROM ME!!

I NEED BACKUP AT THE
SALLIS APARTMENT ASAP!

WHERE'S
MONTOKA??

SHE'S
ALREADY
ON THE
WAY
OVER?

MONTOKA!
ARE YOU
HERE ON
THE NET?

LISTEN,
BULLOCK--THERE'S
SOMETHING YOU
NEED TO KNOW--

TELL ME
WHEN YOU
GET HERE--

-- I GOTTA GO SAVE
A NICE LADY AND HER
KID!

BULLOCK!!
THINGS AREN'T
WHAT THEY
SEEM TO BE--!

!WHEEZE!
LORDY..

GOTTA

SWEAR

OFF

THEM
DONUTS!

WHUZZIS,
A SUICIDAL
BIKER
CONVENTION?

WHERE'S
BAT-THING?



I'M TAKING
YOU DOWN,
BIG-GUY!

BA-DOOM!

KB-CHUCK!

BA-DOOM!

KB-CHUCK!





BULLOCK!
I'LL SSSEE
YOU IN H--!!

BLAM!

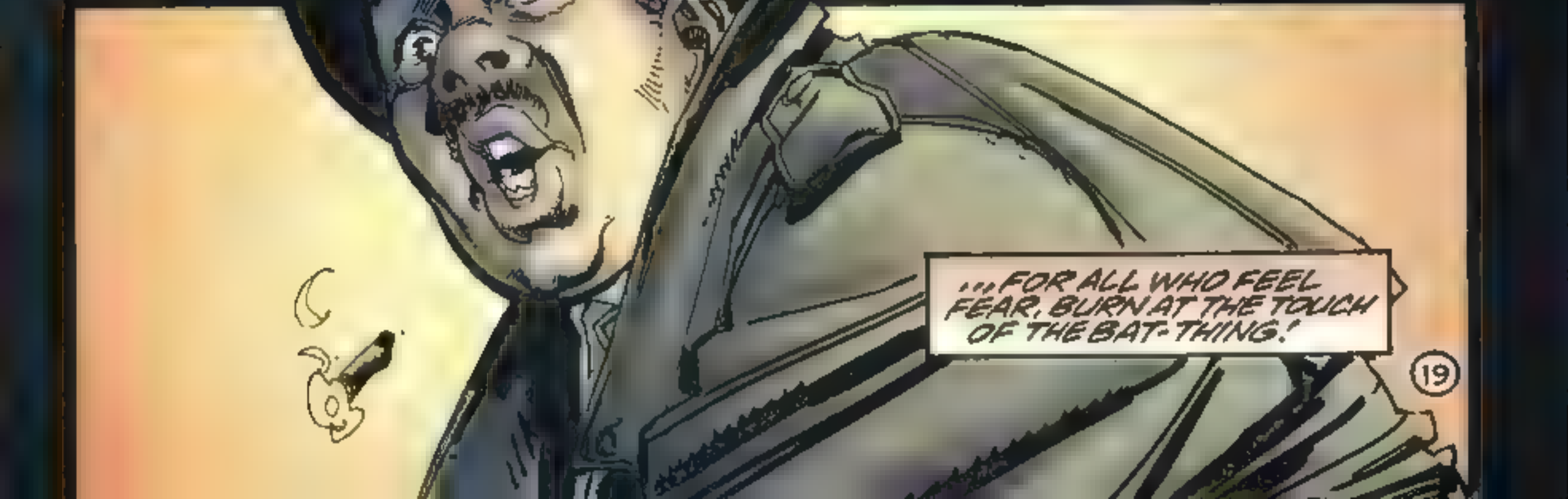
HE
WENT
OVER
ME--!

WHA--?

THE WOULD-BE
ASSASSIN'S CURSE
IS CUT SHORT BY
THROTTLING CLAWS
OF MARSH MUCK
AND DEAD SINEW!



THE KILLER'S
VITRIOLIC RAGE
TRANSMUTES TO
STARK TERROR
AND SO, HE
CONSIGNS
HIMSELF TO A
DEVOURING
CONFLAGRATION..



...FOR ALL WHO FEEL
FEAR, BURN AT THE TOUCH
OF THE BAT-THING!



THERE IT IS!!



HOLD YOUR FIRE!!

DON'T SHOOT THE BAT-THING!



IT SAVED MY LIFE, MONTOYA--

THAT'S WHAT HE'S BEEN DOING ALL ALONG!

HUH?

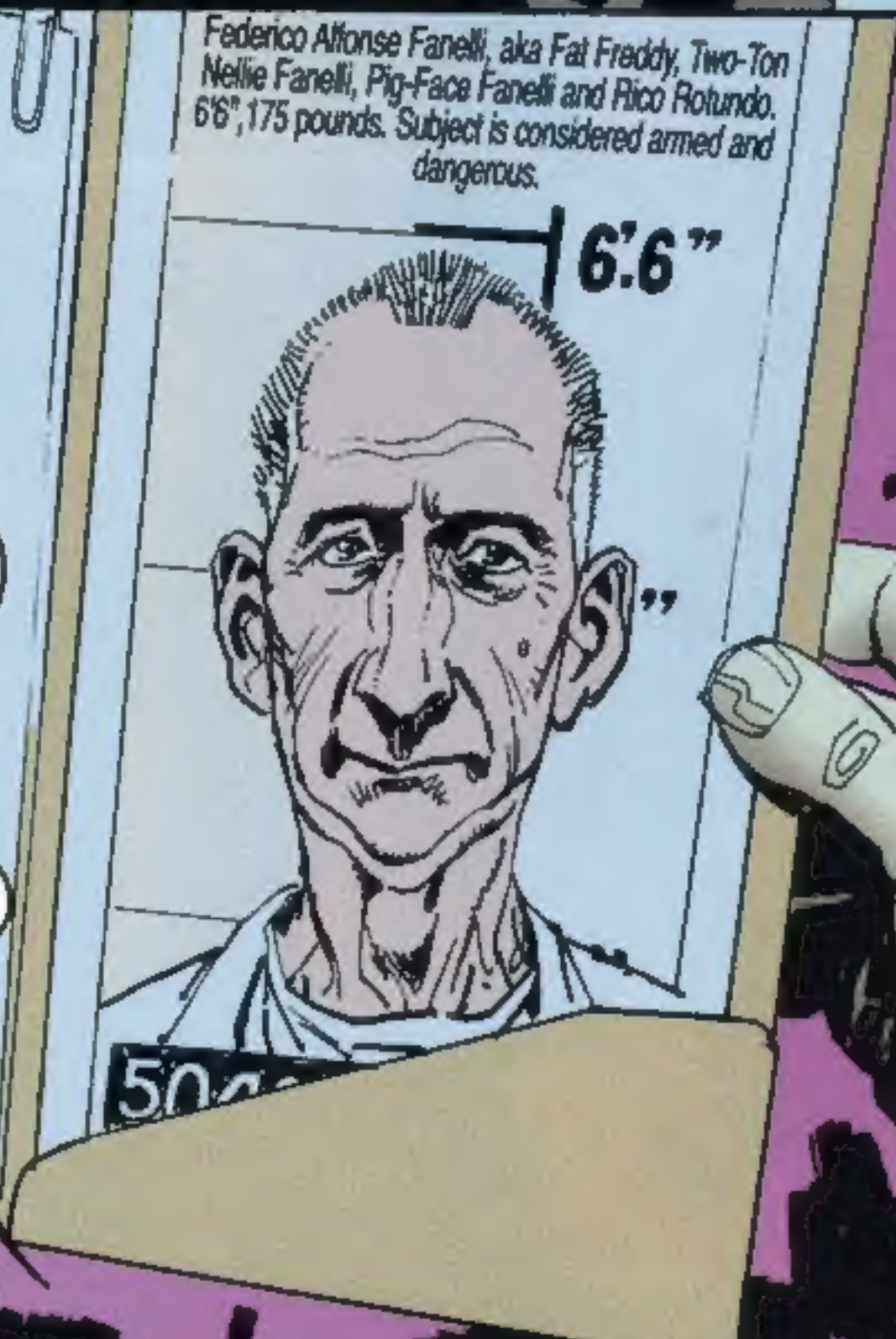


I FOUND THIS ALERT BULLETIN ON YOUR DESK UNDER A PILE OF REPORTS.

IT SAYS THAT FAT FREDDY ESCAPED FROM THE STATE PEN SIX WEEKS AGO AND IS ALREADY SUSPECTED IN THREE BANK ROBBERIES.

THAT'S HOW HE WAS BANKROLLING HIS VENDETTA AGAINST YOU, BULLOCK!

THIS ISN'T FAT FREDDY!!



Federico Alfonse Fanelli, aka Fat Freddy, Two-Ton Nellie Fanelli, Pig-Face Fanelli and Rico Rotundo. 6'6", 175 pounds. Subject is considered armed and dangerous.

6'6"

502



OH, BUT
IT IS!

YOU BLEW MOST
OF HIS FACE OFF WITH
YOUR SHOTGUN,
BULLOCK!

THE PRISON DOCS
WERE ABLE TO RESTORE
SOME OF IT, BUT THEY
WEREN'T GOING FOR A
GOOD LIKENESS, IF YOU
KNOW WHAT I MEAN.

THE BUCKSHOT
MESSED UP HIS JAW
SO BAD, HE COULDN'T
EAT SOLID FOOD FOR
SIX MONTHS.

HE GOT SKINNY,
AND I GUESS HE
STAYED THAT
WAY--



DETECTIVE
BULLOCK--!

--OH, THANK
GOODNESS, YOU'RE
NOT HURT!

HE GOT AWAY,
MRS. SALLIS.

AND BETWEEN
YOU AND ME AND THE
LAMPPOST, I GOT
A FEELING THE
BAT- THING FILE
IS GONNA GET
MOVED TO A LOW
PRIORITY.

FAT
FREDDY
WAS
TAILING
YOU,
BULLOCK.

WAS
KIRK--?



HE SAW YOU CHECKING IN ON
MRS. SALLIS ALL THE TIME, AND HE
FIGURED SHE WAS SOMETHING
SPECIAL TO YOU, SO HE PUT
OUT A HIT ON HER.

HE WAS OUT TO GET
EVERYTHING YOU CARED
ABOUT--

--AND THEN HE
WAS GOING TO GET YOU,
TOO.

I WAS PUTTING
HER IN DANGER BY
COMING HERE...

... AND SALLIS
STILL FORGAVE
ME.

"ALL THIS TIME, HE WAS
LURKING AROUND HIS OLD
APARTMENT TO PROTECT
HIS FAMILY.

"FLYING IN TO GOTHAM
EVERY NIGHT FROM
WHEREVER IT IS IN
THAT GOD FORSAKEN
SWAMP HE CALLS
HOME.

"SOMEHOW, BAT-THING
SENSED THAT I WAS
LOOKING OUT FOR
HIS PEOPLE, TOO...

"... AND HE STARTED
LOOKING OUT FOR ME
AS WELL. HUGGY WAS
STALKING ME, THAT'S
WHY HE GOT IT!

"I COULDN'T EVER SEE
HIM AS ANYTHING BUT
A MONSTER, BUT NOW
I WONDER..."

"... HOW MUCH HUMANITY
IS THERE STILL LEFT
INSIDE OF HIM?"

END

Dear Slime-Masters,

Bat-Thing rules! Out of all the swamp-muck, gloom-and-doom, eco-paranoia, bio-tech-experiment-gone-awry, misunderstood monster comics around, this one sort of stands out from the pack like an unpretentious panelist at a comic-book convention. I especially liked the storyline about the two-headed dog and the little blind girl! Wow! More concentrated weirdness like that and you'll have a dedicated reader for life! I am confused about one thing: Isn't swamp muck really dense and heavy? Like, isn't it heavier than water? If Bat-Thing is so dense and heavy, how does he manage to fly?

Ernst Stavro Blumenfeld
Avalon, Miss.

Bat-Thing's swamp-muck-transformed tissue is filled with minute air pockets. Think of it as whipped protoplasm.

Dear Editorial People,

I am very upset. How can you take the genius creation of Marv Wein and Bernie Ploog and let a hack like Larry Hama trample it into the muck? I was aghast when you let him take over DARK CLAW. I stopped buying a book that I had a complete run of, including the hard-to-find G. Waldo Emerson and Nelson Bridwell issues! I know that a lot of older readers cut their teeth on Hama's "Sgt. Fury and the Combat-Happy Joes of Easy Company," but that was fifteen years ago! Besides, Hama is a notorious self-professed anti-continuity freak! A regular RET-CON RANGER! What this book needs is more attention to minutiae. Remember what Mies Van Der Rohe said about details!!

Eamon Goldstein
Toronto, Ontario

Golly, Eamon, you sure do have a lot of opinions, don't you?

Dear Bat-Thing,

I wish I was like you and didn't have a central nervous system. Then I wouldn't be depressed so much and have such disturbing thoughts all the time. If only I had a body made out of swamp muck and I could fly! I would soar above this horrible, unfair world and be free, like some great dripping bird. Oh, and then, if I was like you, I would have a touch that oozed sulfuric acid and people who feared me would burn up and sizzle into charred cinders! Then, I would stand there, emotionless, over their pitiful, smoking remains and think deep thoughts about the meaninglessness of our existence.

Cletus Arkham
Ravencroft, NH

Okay. Anything you say, Cletus.

Dear Swamp Suckers,

I wrote a song about Bat-Thing. Here it is:

Bat-Thing is the baddest dude;
He's ultra-nasty and he's rude.
When he's flying in the air
He might get into your hair.
Don't go messin' with his head;
He'll burn you up and make you dead.

How's that? It's not as long or as jumpin' as the one I wrote about Dark Claw, but it's got a real 'tude goin', you know?

Tshonge Arbuthnot
Cleveland, Ohio

What can we say? We are always delighted to tear open an envelope and find more ragin' rhymes from Tshonge!

Dear Editor,

I am curious about the dark direction the storyline is taking. Bingle-Burly the Two-Headed Dog and Alicia Murdock, the little blind girl, are such bizarre, complex characters to be appearing in a regular comic book. What is going through Larry Hama's mind? And the drawings by Rodolfo Damaggio were simply stunning! How do these characters fit into the Amalgam universe and continuity? Have they appeared in other books that I don't know about? Are they coming back? Is Alicia a mutant? How does she walk through walls if she isn't? How did Bingle-Burly learn to speak Serbo-Croatian? I know these are a lot of questions, but I really do want to know!

Samantha Kumbat
BROOKLYN, CA

Bingle-Burly and Alicia have both appeared in STRANGE JOURNEYS INTO MYSTERY as a backup feature to Dr. Strange-Fate before he got his own title back in the sixties. You can find out more about them in the upcoming special issue where they meet Howard the Mxztplx!

—Larry Hama

NEXT ISSUE: Batty meets the loquacious Lobo the Duck. Be here, believer!

Cover Credits: Rodolfo Damaggio, pencils;
Bill Sienkiewicz, inks;
Patrick Martin, colors and separations.

AMALGAM



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